**Chairman’s Report**

**2021 AGM**

As 2021 draws to a close, so does my tenure as Chairman of Norwich Swan Swimming Club, after four eventful years. I will therefore take this opportunity to reflect on the previous 12 months along with the changes I have seen during my time as Chair.

The last year has been incredibly challenging as the theme of lockdowns, pool closures and instability have had an impact on both the Learn To Swim programme and the Squad structure. I would like to thank the committee for all their hard work and late nights, constantly reviewing what is required and making the challenging decisions to keep our club viable. As each month passed and a new challenge presented itself, the committee were always accountable and met each change of direction head on. Without their hard work and dedication, I do feel the club may have struggled to survive as unfortunately was the case for so many swimming clubs across the country. The impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on swimming will be felt for many years, but we are fortunate to be in a position of strength as we build for the future.

There have been so many people that have helped me during my time, but I feel it's only fair to highlight a few important individuals who made an incredible difference and without whom I would not be here today. Firstly, thank you to Anne Jarrett, who has worked tirelessly in the background dealing with numerous enquiries, processing memberships and supporting our admin processes from behind the scenes. Anne’s dedication to Norwich Swan Swimming Club cannot be understated and I know she commits to many more hours than would be expected of any volunteer. Many of the more challenging tasks and uncomfortable conversations are often dealt with efficiently and professionally resulting in satisfactory outcomes for our members. I'd also like to thank Abby Chapman, who I can honestly say has being the driving force behind our club for several years now. Never wanting to be in the limelight, Abby, is involved in nearly every aspect of the day to day running of Norwich Swan, with hardly any event or task not having her input. She was the worthy winner of our ‘Volunteer of the Year’ award, but this doesn't really do justice to the incredible amount of hard work and support provided by Abby during my time as Chair and I cannot thank her enough for everything that she has done for the club. We are incredibly lucky to have her as part of the team and much of our success must be attributed to her. Our Treasurer, David Mann, has transformed how the club operates over the last four years. He has successfully guided the committee in making some incredibly challenging decisions which have allowed Swan to succeed and grow to where it is today. His professional guidance and warm personality have allowed some of the most difficult decisions the club is faced financially, especially in the last 12 months, to reach a satisfactory conclusion leaving the club in a fantastic position for the future. Again, David works behind the scenes giving up much of his time, which has allowed our club to make the right financial decisions at a time when so many have struggled. Lastly, my thanks go to Stewart Park, who I appointed as Head Coach 3 years ago. Stewart has been very clear from the start as to what he feels the ethos and culture of our swimmers should be. This has been shared throughout the club, via the coaching team to instil in our young people his values not only for swimming, but life in general and the expectations and behaviours of what it means to be a Norwich Swan swimmer. The club continues to grow under his guidance, achieving success both in and out of the water and I'm confident that the future looks bright under his leadership.

On a final note, I would like to say how grateful I am for all the fantastic memories swimming has given me. Over the last 25 years I’ve been lucky enough to have been ‘married to the sport’ thanks to the wonderful Mrs. M. This led to being a ‘swim dad’, resulting in countless away galas, road trips and all the highs and lows associated with it. I’ve had the honour and privilege to be a team manager both at home, but more importantly abroad, which allowed me to share some fantastic times which hopefully many will look back on with fond memories for many years to come. I am grateful for every training session I was lucky enough to share, all those hot pool decks and hard plastic chairs, the failed timing systems and computer crashes mid race, Vlogs and tutus, angry parents, delighted children, silent car journeys and PBs. I know I will miss it very much when I step away but wouldn’t have changed it for the world.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of the history of NSSC and all the very best for the future.

Andy Merrill

Chairman